

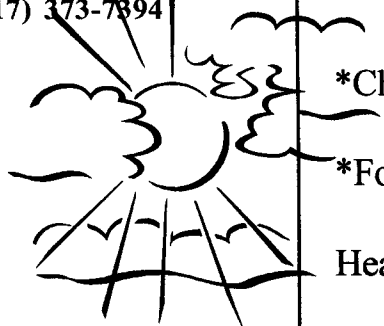
***Department  
of  
Human  
Services***

# **Articles in Today's Clips**

## **Tuesday, June 20, 2006**

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

Prepared by the  
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Communications  
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# **District didn't sound alarm**

## **Sister's school absences failed to trigger probe**

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Tuesday, June 20, 2006

By Ron Fonger

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FLINT - The Flint School District had sufficient reason to take legal action against the parents of Rose Kelly before the 5-year-old died in squalor on June 3.

But the district never pushed a neglect case against the family, even though the girl's older sister, 10, had a chronic attendance problem - missing 80 days of school in just two years at Washington Elementary School.

A school official said Monday that Rose's sister was improving in her attendance and schoolwork, two of the reasons the school system took less drastic steps than it might have. According to school records, she missed 13 days last year in fourth grade.

"We have to give the parents a chance," said Shari Gillespie, staff assistant in the district's Office of Pupil Personnel. "She had made a drastic improvement."

But Genesee County Prosecutor David Leyton said he would have

investigated, based on the situation at that point.

"If they had referred that case to me, I would have taken it," Leyton

said.

What school officials didn't know was that Rose and her three siblings were living inside a home that police said was infested with lice and fleas, and strewn with garbage and dog feces.

Rose was never enrolled in school. The little girl died at home of an illness without ever being taken to the doctor. An autopsy is pending, and a police investigation is continuing.

School officials said Kelly's sister missed 50 days of school as a kindergartner and 30 more in third grade. Attendance figures were not available for first or second grade.

Gillespie said the girl's attendance problems prompted district officials to go to the fourth step of its attendance enforcement plan, meaning she and her family received special services from the district. Gillespie would not specify what the services were.

She said she did not know what other contact the district had with the family or the parents - Michelle L. Bowen and Jeffery C. Kelly - before receiving the extra services.

Gillespie said the girl's attendance improved in the past year, and she was performing grade-level work and was popular with other students. She said there was nothing to indicate she was living in the squalor described after Rose died.

Other attendance information regarding the girl was not immediately available, Gillespie said, but current policy calls for the district to head to court after as few as 13 absences in one school year.

Arminda Garcia, a school social worker and member of the Genesee County Department of Human Services advisory board, said she never received paperwork to file a court petition - something that could have triggered a deeper look into the family's living conditions.

DHS officials have not discussed specifics of the Kelly case but have renewed pleas for neighbors and schools to report any potential cases of abuse and/or neglect.

Last year, Genesee Family Judge Duncan Beagle put one parent in jail for contempt of court, and Leyton started a program to bring charges against parents with truant students under Michigan's compulsory attendance law.

Gillespie said Leyton's program wasn't in place when Kelly's sister had her highest number of absences in kindergarten and third grade. She said the law does not give the district the power to push a neglect case when the child is younger than 6, such as Kelly's sister was in kindergarten.

Former state Rep. Vera B. Rison said the chance to see a home in person gives caseworkers, educators or police the best information.

‘She recalled meeting a

boy with broken eyeglasses and knowing immediately that all was not well with the family.

"If you pay attention, you can see some things. You can observe some things," Rison said at an emergency DHS advisory board meeting Friday. In addition to Garcia, Rison and Jessie Muldrew are members of the DHS advisory board.

DHS officials have not discussed details of its contact with Bowen and Jeffery C. Kelly in 2004 and 2005 - interaction mentioned in a petition to terminate their parental rights.

The Michigan Office of Children's Ombudsman is investigating why the DHS left Rose and three other children in the home until the little girl's death.

**QUICK TAKE**

Attendance policy

A large number of school absences can signal something is wrong in a student's home. The Flint School District policy for

dealing with families of elementary school students when there are chronic attendance problems says:

☐ After four absences, the teacher will notify the parent by phone or mail.

☐ After six absences, the teacher will send a letter requesting a conference to the parent.

☐ After eight absences, the principal will send a written notice to the parent. A referral to the district's Youth Service Bureau or other support services will be made at this time.

☐ After 12 absences, the parents and school personnel will have a conference concerning the attendance problems.

☐ If the attendance problem continues, the school will initiate an educational neglect petition in Genesee County Family Court.

☐ After 15 absences, the parent's name will be given to the Genesee County

The Journal has filed a Freedom of Information Act request with the DHS, seeking details of complaints about and investigations of Kelly and Bowen since 1995.

prosecutor for  
possible  
prosecution.  
Source: Flint  
School District  
\*\*\*

MICHIGAN

## **Mom held in son's death will head to court**

### **She's charged in husband's assault; trial set for July**

*June 20, 2006*

BY JACK KRESNAK  
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

A precursor to the murder trial of an Ingham County couple accused in the death of their adopted 7-year-old son is set to begin July 17 in 55th District Court.

That's the day a jury will be selected to decide whether Ricky Holland's mother, Lisa Holland, is guilty of misdemeanor assault. She is accused of slapping her husband, Tim Holland, on Jan. 25 in their Leroy Township home.

Lisa Holland was arrested that day, then charged with felonious assault and misdemeanor domestic assault and released the following day. But the incident led Tim Holland to take police to Ricky's remains south of Dansville on Jan. 27.

The felony charge was dismissed the next week, but both parents were charged Feb. 7 with open murder in Ricky's death and are being held without bond pending a trial set for Sept. 11.

A trial on the misdemeanor charge against Lisa Holland was to begin Monday but was adjourned by 55th District Court Judge Rosemarie Aquilina because of legal complications in the prosecutor's case.

The case could be a test to see whether an impartial jury can be selected for Lisa Holland in the face of massive publicity in Ingham County about Ricky's disappearance and death.

If the misdemeanor assault case goes to trial, Tim Holland likely would be called to testify against his wife, a situation that could lead to Tim Holland being questioned about the circumstances that led to Ricky's death.

Lisa Holland's attorney, Andrew Abood, said Monday that his client is innocent. Even though a jury could be selected July 17, he said a trial might not begin until August.

A vigil will be held in Williamston at 8 p.m. July 2, a year to the day that the Hollands reported their adopted son had run away.

Contact JACK KRESNAK at 313-223-4544.

# Wary parents invading MySpace Web site

GENESEE COUNTY

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Monday, June 19, 2006

By Kristin Longley

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GENESEE COUNTY - You can learn a lot about 16-year-old Emily Dubie by looking at her MySpace profile, but you won't see her last name or contact information.

Under the "About Me" heading on the Grand Blanc teen's page is an artistic arrangement of words and phrases: "I am a hopeless romantic," "I never ate paste," and "Shopping is, and will always, be spectacular," are just some of her listed quirks.

Emily said she carefully chooses how to represent who she is - but not where she is - for her own safety.

But there's another reason her personal information remains carefully guarded. Her mother, Joanne, created her own account to keep tabs on Emily's MySpace activities, something she thinks more parents ought to do.

"I tell her, 'You know, I'm watching you via the Internet,'" she said. "If I see something I don't like, it gets changed."

Many parents like Joanne Dubie are becoming increasingly wary of [www.myspace.com](http://www.myspace.com), a social networking site with more than 72 million members, after a Tuscola County teen flew to the Middle East this month to be with a man she met on the popular site. There's also been scattered accounts of sexual predators targeting minors and kids making threats against other users.

"A lot of people use it for the wrong reasons," said 17-year-old Rachel Wallace. "It's easy to lie about who you are."

Rachel's younger sister created a MySpace account - against MySpace rules that require users be 14 or older - because she wanted to chat with friends and join the trend, Rachel said. But her mother, Jodi Hunt, discouraged her from using it because it's just too dangerous, she said.

"My concern is that kids seem to think of it as a place where they can bare their souls," Hunt said. "But employers and college professionals are looking on there, and maybe they're making impressions they really don't want them to see."

But MySpace can be helpful, Rachel said.

She recently switched from Davison High School to Goodrich High School and used MySpace to connect with people at Goodrich. When school started, she didn't feel lost in a hallway full of strangers.

Emily's boyfriend uses MySpace to keep in touch with his twin sister, who lives in Texas, she said.

"It's great to meet people and keep in touch," said Rachel, who has 772 friends on MySpace. "It's just so addictive!"

She checks her account about five times a day to chat with friends, post new photos and personal updates, and leave comments on friends' pages.

"It dominates our lives," she said, laughing.

Dubie says the pervasiveness of MySpace can work to parents' advantage. Anyone, including parents, can create an account and use it to search by full name for any other MySpace user.

"So it's good for the parents," she said. "But it's also good for the predators, so we have to watch that."

Dubie said the parents of the Tuscola County teen, 16-year-old Katherine R. Lester, weren't watching closely enough.

Katherine returned from Amman, Jordan, to her Gilford home on June 9 only after U.S. authorities encouraged her to board a return flight, the FBI said. The straight-A student tricked her parents into getting her a passport and disappeared without notice, police said.

"The parents needed to be a little bit more involved," Dubie said. "Obviously, it took a long time for her to form a relationship like that, and her personality probably changed."

Katherine had posted on her MySpace page that she wanted to visit Israel, her family has since said. But they had no knowledge of her relationship with the man from Jordan.

"There are things parents can do to keep their kids from falling into the tangled Web that MySpace has become," Dubie said. "You have to keep an open line because if you lose it, odds are you're going to lose your child to something else."

QUICK TAKE
MySpace: What parents should know
<input type="checkbox"/> Children under 14 are not permitted to open a MySpace account.



- ☐ Younger users' profiles can be set to "private," so only friends can view it.
- ☐ Parents can delete a child's MySpace account if they have the password or access to the e-mail account under which the MySpace account was opened.
- ☐ Users can block other users from sending them messages or posting comments.
- ☐ Harassment, hate speech and inappropriate content can be reported to MySpace officials.
- ☐ To learn more about what parents can do to keep children safe on MySpace, visit the safety tips page at:  
<http://www1.myspace.com/misc/tipsForParents.html>.

Tuesday, June 20, 2006

Detroit News Letters

## **Put electronic tethers on sexual offenders?**

### **Figuring out sexual offenders**

The big problem is figuring out why an offender does what he does ("Sex offenders get GPS tethers," June 17).

If the possibility of a repeat crime is high, then an offender shouldn't be released. If there's ever an argument for three strikes and you're out, this type of crime should end that. While curing is what is needed, in the meantime two and out should be the rule.

*Jim Kajpust*

*Saginaw*

### **Punishment reasonable**

Jessica's law is a reasonable punishment for criminal sex offenders. One point raised by some critics of the law is about the 25 years to life provision for imprisonment. They say convictions in these cases are hard to come by because they are hard to prove.

Prosecutors like having the option of allowing the accused to have a choice of pleading guilty to a lesser charge in preference to standing trial. There are some who say its better for the child if they don't have to testify.

One provision that concerns me is the global positioning systems monitoring. Its cost of operation can be rather substantial. Requiring the bracelets won't necessarily prevent the crime from happening. Perhaps Jessica's law would be better served without this one provision.

*Todd Powley*

*Alpena*

### **Tethers don't seem right**

This just doesn't seem right. People are more worried about tracking sex offenders but don't care if a murderer lives next door. Huh, go figure.

*B. McDonald*

*Warren*

### **Beware false accusations**

For those who favor global position system tracking, thank your lucky stars that a loved one of yours wasn't falsely accused of rape and sent to prison. Then you will realize what a havoc it creates on the prisoner's family and after when he tries to resume life and become a productive citizen.

*Tom Hillford*

*Southgate*

# 'Saints in disguise'

Monday, June 19, 2006

By Teresa Taylor Williams  
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

This is the time of year when families dote on their graduating teens who are preparing for their future as adults.

But an allegation of abuse in Daniel Wilhite's family by a friend of the family forced him to face adult issues, including earning a living for himself.

A year ago, the world Wilhite, then 17, knew was shaken when he, his brother and sister were removed from their mother's home and put in foster care.

It was the first of a series of interactions the youth would have with the county's judicial system. Wilhite moved in with his father and worked as a telemarketer, but he was again removed because he said the judge deemed his father could not provide a stable enough home.

"I've always felt older than my friends," said Wilhite, who plans to work construction this summer. "I've learned a lot."

Throughout the court hearings, school changes, and worries about members of his family, Wilhite had someone in his corner: Pam Cox of Twin Lake, who served as his Court Appointed Special Advocate, or CASA.

"This whole situation has caused stress to these three kids," Cox said. "A lot of kids emerge out of these situations bitter, but Dan isn't."

A nationwide children's advocacy program, CASA has been in Muskegon County since 1992, and is a service provided by the Child Abuse Council.

Adults are screened and trained in the juvenile court system, family dynamics, cultural diversity, substance abuse, the foster care system, and how to provide court testimony.

CASA volunteers determine the best interests of the children who have been victims of abuse and neglect, and, after assigned cases, sit in court proceedings as their representatives.

Currently, 52 CASA volunteers serve on behalf of 108 children in court, where cases range from physical to sexual abuse.

CASA volunteers are "saints in disguise," according to Muskegon County 14th Circuit Judge William C. Marietti, because they get involved in challenging family situations, and the number of cases can be overwhelming,

"The need for these folks is greater than ever. The severity of child neglect and the frequency of it seems to be escalating.

"Whether you're a CASA, a caseworker or a judge, you have to take just one child at a time. That's the only way you can stop from being totally depressed by the large number," said Marietti.

"The resources are limited, and CASA is an absolutely vital part of the judicial process in dealing with neglected and abused children," said Marietti.

The mission of the Child Abuse Council is to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect through education, child advocacy, and community collaboration.

Last year, 22,446 children were reached by its prevention and education programs, according to the Child Abuse Council.

The three areas of focus for the Child Abuse Council include the CASA program and the Children's Advocacy Center, which is a place for forensic interviewing, on-site examinations, and counseling therapy for children whom sexual abuse is suspected.

Lastly, the agency's prevention program consists of specialists making presentations in schools countywide to children preschool through high school age on what is appropriate when it comes to their bodies, and how to keep themselves safe.

For the very young children, they use song and puppets to encourage interaction with children. Advocates also speak to adult community groups on how to protect children.

Roughly 400 child abuse cases were reported to the agency last year, and 223 children were interviewed as part of an investigation into sexual abuse allegations. Further, 59 children underwent medical exams by a volunteer doctor, and 118 new counseling cases were opened.

Every Head Start preschooler, kindergartner, and first-, third- and fifth-grade student learned about personal safety skills through the agency's prevention program. More than 4,000 middle and high school students learned about the issues of teen pregnancy through the "Baby Think It Over" program.

Although their duties can appear similar, the Child Abuse Council is not the same as Child Protective Services, a state-run department that investigates reports of abuse and neglect in children. It also provides services to children and their families, and places children in foster care.

"We serve as a resource for (protective services), and we want them to utilize this facility for that purpose," said Child Abuse Council Executive Director Jeanie Colella.

The council is sustained mainly by funds from United Way of the Lakeshore, a federal grant from the Victims of Crime Act, and individual donations. As many as 10 fundraisers each year sustain programs.

People who are empathetic to the children's situations and who have time to dedicate are crucial to the success of the CASA program, according to CASA Director Kyleen Gee.

The next training for potential volunteers is next fall, she said.

"CASA is a huge time commitment, and they get to know the kids better than almost anyone else," said Gee. "No one (involved with the program) views them as just volunteers."

Harold Jones of Norton Shores is currently a CASA working on his first case, which involves a 5-year-old child. Retired from the corrections, he said it's rewarding and that he simply "cares about kids."

"The common thing I saw with prisoners were that either one or both parents were addicted to drugs, they were abused, abandoned, or mistreated in some kind of way in their childhood," said Jones. "I saw this as an opportunity to be a positive role model for kids."

Cox said she was warned by friends that being a CASA wouldn't give her the "warm fuzzies" like other community volunteer opportunities, but instead would "break her heart."

"Some days your heart does get broken, but on others, the kids come through and you feel proud of them," said Cox.

Cathy Watters of Fruitland Township has been a CASA for four years. She is currently on her third case involving a six- and 12-year-old.

She and her husband have also served as foster parents, where they saw firsthand the depth of what abuse can do to a child.

"You go into it hoping you can help a child, but some have been so damaged," she said. "As a CASA, you have to follow through with your case to the end because a lot of kids' foster parents and caseworkers change. The one thing that's constant may be their CASA."

Watters said she devotes about 10-15 hours per week on her case.

"If you want to help kids, if foster parenting sounds too hard and you've got some time, this is a great way.

"My husband and I feel we've been so lucky in our lives, it seems easy to give back," she said.

Tuesday, June 20, 2006

## **States lose Medicare drug fight Supreme Court refuses to bar prescription plan, despite complaints about feared high cost to locals.**

Gina Holland / Associated Press

**WASHINGTON** -- The Supreme Court refused Monday to block part of the 6-month-old Medicare prescription drug program, a defeat for states that claim they may get stuck with the bill.

Justices declined without comment to temporarily stop part of the law that added a prescription drug benefit to Medicare, the federal health insurance program for the elderly and disabled. States were contesting a requirement that they pay the federal government for some expenses.

The 2003 law went into effect Jan. 1. About 43 million people are eligible for the benefit, although some missed a May deadline to sign up and may face a penalty.

Texas, Kentucky, Maine, Missouri and New Jersey called on justices to issue an injunction and to allow them to bring the appeal. Justices rejected both requests without explanation.

Ten other states also filed briefs with the court claiming the program threatens state independence: Alaska, Arizona, Connecticut, Kansas, Mississippi, New Hampshire, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Vermont.

State lawsuits against the federal government can be filed directly with the Supreme Court, or begin in lower court.

The Bush administration told justices that this case belonged in a lower court, and that states should actually receive more money, not less, under the law.

"The states cannot establish that the (law) ... will cause them any financial hardship at all," Solicitor General Paul Clement wrote. "By contrast, an injunction barring implementation of (the law) would deprive the Medicare Part D program of an important source of the funding necessary to furnish prescription drugs to individuals over 65 or who have disabilities."

The contested part of the law involves a provision that requires states to pay the federal government part of the money they are expected to save because they no longer must pay for drugs for people enrolled in both Medicare and Medicaid. People who were covered by state Medicaid programs are part of the new program.

Texas Solicitor General Ted Cruz had told justices that states are expected to have to pay billions of dollars over the next two years. He said, however, states have not been told how much they must pay or when they must pay up.

That makes it difficult for states planning for spending on schools or natural disasters, he said.

A group of law professors and health care experts told the court that although it is promoted as generous "the new drug benefit threatens to unravel both Medicare and Medicaid."

# Crittenton may be forced to scale back

Tuesday, June 20, 2006

By Susan J. Demas  
sdemas@citpat.com -- 768-4927

They started coming to the Florence Crittenton Home before the Great Depression, the teenage mothers no one else wanted.

Now the Jackson nonprofit that delayed paying its 50 employees last week due to state funding woes may have to scale back a residential program that has helped thousands of Michigan girls and their babies since 1919.

"It would have a big impact," said Jackson County Family Court Judge Susan Vandercook, who has referred cases to the home. "And not just in our county."

Florence Crittenton provides the only juvenile delinquent program for mothers in the state. Diminished service would mean more girls fending for themselves and more of their children languishing in foster care, Executive Director Robert Powell said.

"What could happen? Your imagination can run wild," he said.

The end result would be more kids in the child welfare system, which costs taxpayers money, Powell argues.

Jackson County already has one of the highest rates of child abuse and neglect in Michigan.

Not only does the state Department of Human Services owe Crittenton \$70,000, Powell said, it has cut referrals to the home in half since Christmas. Powell is scheduled to meet with DHS officials July 17; DHS officials canceled a meeting slated for Thursday.

DHS spokeswoman Maureen Sorbet couldn't confirm the \$70,000 figure, but said DHS is "taking steps to resolve the payment issue."

Florence Crittenton has 18 of its 47 beds filled at houses at 1603 Lansing Ave. and 521 Wildwood Ave. To meet the agency's budget, beds must be 80 percent filled.

Shutting down one of the two homes -- and shrinking the number of girls served -- might be the only way to save the program, Powell said.

Houses are usually full, the director added, but the state's strapped budget situation is trickling down to his organization. About two-thirds of the agency's \$1.6 million in annual revenue comes from state and federal sources.



Employees who were due a combined \$30,000 Thursday were paid Monday. Ten new referrals over the last two weeks mean Florence Crittenton won't have any problem making its next \$30,000 bi-weekly payroll, Powell said.

Still, board member Jan Maino said "all options are on the table" to get the organization through choppy financial waters. The agency is actively seeking donations and grants.

"This isn't something any of us could have predicted," said Maino, second vice president.

One residential counselor has already been laid off. Two more employees could be let go if the program serving 76 girls last year is cut, Powell said.

Salaries have been frozen since last year, including Powell's compensation package that tops \$70,000.

Florence Crittenton might downsize its facilities; it currently has four locations. In 2004, the nonprofit owed on loans of \$238,000, its tax return shows. The debt is \$35,000 for the Wildwood house mortgage, Powell said.

Another option is reducing the term of a residential program in which teens work, go to school and receive counseling -- currently one year.

Outcomes have been positive. Ninety percent of girls enrolled don't have a repeat pregnancy; 70 percent stay in school afterward.

Under a condensed program, girls would stay at the home for a few months, deliver their babies and leave.

"It's better than nothing," Powell said.

Florence Crittenton has been a leader in community-based initiatives for at-risk youth starting in 1999. Programs for teen fathers and pregnancy prevention, which receive United Way funding, are not in danger of closing down, Powell said.

About a half-dozen local nonprofits haven't met payroll over the last year, noted Maino, also vice president for the Jackson County Community Foundation.

David Swenson, vice president for the Lansing-based Michigan Nonprofit Association, said he has not seen a statewide trend.

# **Crittenton Home facing financial crisis**

Monday, June 19, 2006

By Susan J. Demas  
sdemas@citpat.com -- 768-4927

For the first time in 87 years, Florence Crittenton Home could not make its bi-weekly payroll for 50 employees last week.

Executive Director Robert Powell said the organization will pay its workers the \$30,000 today -- two days late.

"The (financial) situation was still worse when I took over than now," said Powell, the agency's head since 1998. "We were more than \$300,000 in debt."

The reason for the nonprofit's financial woes is a backlog in state funding, he said. The organization that helps at-risk youth is still waiting for \$70,000 from the Department of Human Services for children who lived in its residential home six months ago.

Founded in 1919 as a home for unwed mothers, Florence Crittenton celebrated its 85th anniversary in 2004 with some fanfare.

The nonprofit seemed to be in good financial shape, with \$100,000 more in revenues than expenses and a healthy fund balance of \$384,000, its 2004 tax return shows.

Florence Crittenton's financial crunch comes a month after it garnered \$76,000 from United Way of Jackson County.

That's about a \$20,000 cut from United Way's 2003-05 funding; Florence Crittenton had sought more than \$130,000.

Executive Director Ken Toll said Powell called him Friday about a "short-term crisis." Powell did not ask United Way for a loan, Toll said.

One problem is that the state has changed its referral system for Florence Crittenton's 47-bed residential programs for teenage girls and their babies at 1603 Lansing Ave.

"If their house isn't full, they can't balance the budget," Toll said.

About \$1 million -- almost two-thirds -- of Florence Crittenton's \$1.6 million revenue came from Medicare/Medicaid funding, tax records show. United Way doesn't fund the agency's residential program.

Its teen father, juvenile justice and teen pregnancy programs -- which United Way does fund -- have seen "tremendous results," Toll said.

# **Police find escapee from juvenile home**

Tuesday, June 20, 2006

By Rex Hall Jr. and Natasha Robinson  
Kalamazoo Gazette

A 15-year-old Kalamazoo boy who escaped earlier this month from the Kalamazoo County Juvenile Home was found this morning by police at an apartment complex on the east side of Kalamazoo County, authorities said.

Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety investigators had been searching for Myquan Deantae Rogers since June 6, when he and a 16-year-old boy overpowered a staff member at the juvenile home and escaped through a 21-inch-square window.

The 16-year-old was found by police June 11.

Rogers was apprehended about 5:30 this morning at Gull Run Apartments on Gull Road, Lt. Mike Werkema said, and is being held at the juvenile home. Werkema said Rogers was in possession of suspected crack cocaine when police found him.

The day of his escape, Rogers had been ordered by a Kalamazoo County District Court judge to stand trial as an adult on several charges, including two counts of assault with intent to commit murder.

# Wyoming teen charged as kidnapper

Tuesday, June 20, 2006

By HELEN LOUNSBURY  
TIMES WRITER

WEST BRANCH - A 12-year-old West Branch girl who fled to Wyoming with a young Internet acquaintance this month is being treated as a runaway - tethered and monitored in her home.

But Wyoming investigators view her accomplice, a Casper, Wyo., teen, as much more than a runaway, police said Monday. To date, the boy has been charged with felony kidnapping and interfering with parental custody.

"A lot of people feel this is a typical runaway case, but I don't," said Detective Kathryn Davison of the Casper City Police Department. "Neither does the district attorney. She was 10 when he started contacting her. She was 12, still a mere child, when he came and got her.

"If she were 16 or 17, we might look at this differently," Davison added. "But I feel he was grooming her."

For what purpose Jason Pickler, 17, was "grooming" Trista Garland, the detective declined to say. But she described the boy as "antisocial" and "dangerous."

"He's not crazy. He's not a psycho," Davison said. "But he's dangerous because he goes by his own rules. He totally disregards what's right and wrong in the real world."

Pickler's world, Davison added, is his computer. The boy's parents have home-schooled him for the past three years.

"He's very reclusive, to the point that his social world is the Internet," she said. "He's not restricted socially by his parents, but the computer is where he's chosen to live."

Wyoming prosecutors said they will ask the court this week to charge Pickler as an adult. At 17, he's considered a juvenile under Wyoming law.

Last week, a Wyoming judge bound Pickler's case over to a higher court for trial. He'll face arraignment there next week on the felony charges against him, administrators said.

Back in West Branch, meanwhile, Trista Garland is spending her summer under house arrest. Since her June 9 return from Wyoming, Garland pleaded guilty in Ogemaw Probate Court to running away. She wears an electronic tether, as a result, and cannot leave her mother's house without court clearance.

Garland is to have no contact with Pickler or have Internet access. She must also undergo random drug screens, Ogemaw County Prosecutor LaDonna Schultz said Monday. The girl's formal sentencing is tentatively scheduled for late July.

"She's scared. She's aware now what could have happened but, thankfully, didn't," said Garland's mother, Jennifer Hughey of West Branch.

Wyoming police haven't minced words with Hughey about Garland's potential peril, the mother added. Investigators confided that Pickler or his family had bought padlocks and "no trespassing" signs in the days before the teen drove to Michigan and took Garland with him to Casper, she said.

Police say they also plan to charge Pickler's father for his role in facilitating the young pair's plan. That part of the investigation is still open, Davison said.

Ogemaw County prosecutors, meanwhile, have charged Pickler with four misdemeanor crimes. They include harboring a runaway, using a computer to commit a crime and contributing to the delinquency of minors. All but the last, a 90-day offense, carry a maximum one-year penalty.

Michigan authorities say they can't charge Pickler with kidnapping because the Michigan statute requires forcing or tricking a victim into departing. Garland, by contrast, wanted to go with Pickler, police emphasize.

"There may be more charges to come, but right now, that's what we have on him," Schultz said. "We're still investigating. "(Garland's) computer has been confiscated... We're waiting to see the content of the e-mails, whether there was anything sexual in nature.

Michigan police can't extradite Pickler for prosecution in West Branch. If, however, Pickler were to return to Michigan to get Garland, as he told Wyoming police he would, local authorities could arrest him, authorities said.

"This is very bizarre behavior," Detective Davison said. "(Pickler's) intentions were to bring her here to keep her, then marry her. He said he thought she was abused at home, but what he describes isn't abuse.

"What scares me is that he's still fixated on her," she continued. "We don't know his full intentions because we caught him early. We're hoping we'll learn more once we get his computer analyzed. That'll take a while."

- Helen Lounsbury covers regional news for The Times. She can be reached at 1-800-727-7661 or by e-mail at [hlounsbury@bc-times.com](mailto:hlounsbury@bc-times.com).



## ATTENTION: WAYNE COUNTY

### DO YOU NEED HELP PAYING YOUR RENT?

The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program (previously termed Section 8) administered by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) may be your answer.

HCV is a federally-funded rental subsidy program that assists families at or below 100% of the federal poverty level in paying their rent (see table below). *If you currently reside or work in Wayne County*, your income falls within allowable limits, and the rental unit you choose to live in meets the Housing Quality Standards and rental limits set forth by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), MSHDA may be able to help pay your rent. Residency preference will be given to all accepted applicants living or working in Wayne County.

A Wayne County HCV Waiting List is being established for qualified applicants and will be open **Thursday, June 22, 2006 ONLY**.

Applications may be picked up in person from 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. on June 22, 2006 at the following Wayne County Michigan Department of Human Services office locations:

27260 Plymouth Rd., Redford, MI 48239  
3606 E. Forest, Detroit, MI 48207  
396 Glendale, Highland Park, MI 48203  
14061 Lappin, Detroit, MI 48205  
17330 Greydale, Detroit, MI 48219  
2700 Hamlin, Inkster, MI 48141  
2400 E. McNichols Rd., Detroit, MI 48212  
6821 Medbury, Detroit, MI 48211  
14000 Schoolcraft, Detroit, MI 48227  
22050 Pennsylvania, Taylor, MI 48180  
25350 Ecorse Rd., Taylor, MI 48180

2929 Russell, Detroit, MI 48207  
6534 W. Jefferson, Detroit, MI 48209  
5131 Grand River, Detroit, MI 48208  
8655 Greenfield, Detroit, MI 48228  
2400 Denton, Hamtramck, MI 48212  
2000 W. Lafayette, Detroit, MI 48216  
13233 Hamilton, Highland Park, MI 48203  
4505 Oakman Blvd., Detroit, MI 48204  
1801 E. Canfield, Detroit, MI 48207  
8031 Tireman Ave., Detroit, MI 48204

If you are unable to pick up an application, please call (313) 456-3575 from 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., **June 22, 2006 ONLY**, and leave your name and address on the answering device to have an application mailed to you.

All completed applications **must be mailed** and postmarked on or before July 10, 2006 to:

Michigan State Housing Development Authority  
Attention: Wayne County Applications  
P.O. Box 02990  
Detroit, MI 48202

Applications received with a postmark date after July 10, 2006 will be returned to sender.

MSHDA will randomly accept 8000 applications for the Wayne County HCV Waiting List. All accepted applications will be placed on the waiting list by a **random** number drawn by lot to determine the waiting list order. **It is not** first come, first serve.

**Multiple applications will not be accepted.**

Persons in Family or Household	100% of Federal Poverty Level
1	\$9,800
2	13,200
3	16,600
4	20,000
5	23,400
6	26,800
7	30,200
8	33,600
For each additional person, add	\$3,400



MSHDA is an Equal Opportunity Lender and an Equal Opportunity Employer.



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**ATTENTION:  
WAYNE COUNTY RESIDENTS**

**Are you currently HOMELESS?**

**Do you need help finding housing or paying your rent?**

The Housing Choice Voucher Program (previously termed Section 8), administered by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), may be your answer.

HCV is a federally-funded rental subsidy program that assists families at or below 100% of the federal poverty level in paying their rent (see table below). If you are currently homeless and reside or work in Wayne County, your income falls within allowable limits, and the rental unit you choose to live in meets the Housing Quality Standards and rental limits set forth by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), MSHDA may be able to help pay your rent.

MSHDA has implemented a Homeless Assistance Recovery Program (HARP) in Wayne County for applicants who can verify that they are homeless and currently engaged in a homeless service program for a period of at least 28 days. A waiting list for applicants who qualify for the Homeless Assistance Recovery Program is being established.

To receive an application, please contact your homeless service provider.

**Multiple applications will not be accepted.**

Persons in Family or Household	100% of Federal Poverty Level
1	\$9,800
2	13,200
3	16,600
4	20,000
5	23,400
6	26,800
7	30,200
8	33,600
For each additional person, add	\$3,400



MSHDA is an Equal Opportunity Lender and an Equal Opportunity Employer.



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# **Four departments fight fire at day care center**

POLICE BLOTTER

GRAND BLANC TOWNSHIP

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Sunday, June 18, 2006

By Ken Palmer

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Firefighters from at least four area departments battled a blaze that severely damaged a day care center on N. Holly Road, near Genesys Regional Medical Center.

The building, owned by the Terry Matlock School of Performing Arts, was closed and unoccupied when the fire broke out in the attic about 5 p.m. Saturday.

No injuries were reported.

Grand Blanc Fire Chief Jim Harmes said the flames spread through the area between a double roof, where firefighters had trouble getting to it. Crews from Atlas Township, Fenton Township and Burton assisted the Grand Blanc department.

The cause was undetermined, although the location suggests it might have been electrical, Harmes said.

Owner Terry Matlock said 32 families used the damaged building, which housed infants and toddlers.

Matlock said she expects to find room for all of those children at the preschool building next door to the burned building or the new Grand Pointe location off Hill Road.

Matlock said clients may call her at (810) 691-4320 for more information.



# **Day care business still operating after fire**

POLICE BLOTTER

GRAND BLANC TOWNSHIP

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Monday, June 19, 2006

By Matt Bach

mbach@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6330

The owner of a day care facility damaged by fire Saturday said her business was open and running today thanks to the help of parents and staff who helped clean up the mess Sunday.

Terry Matlock, owner of Terry Matlock School of Performing Arts, said the school's infant and toddler building on N. Holly Road was destroyed by a fire in the attic possibly caused by an electrical problem. The building was closed and unoccupied when fire broke out about 5 p.m. Saturday.

Matlock and others spent Sunday sifting through the gutted building, cleaning toys and supplies that could be salvaged. All 38 children assigned to the center were placed in other day care buildings run by Matlock in the area.

I'm terribly thankful it happened on weekend when it was empty," said Matlock. "A lot parents came (Sunday) and dance students showed up and people came and scrubbed up. The main thing was to make things as smooth as we could for the children."

Published June 20, 2006

[ From the Lansing State Journal ]

Tuesday's letters to the editor

## **Dad gets squeezed**

Regarding Eleanor Garrison's June 14 letter: I wholeheartedly agree.

My son has been downsized by Michigan's economy, and he now works for about half what he was earning before (and with no benefits). After losing his good-paying job, the courts not only won't lower his support payments, they actually have raised them twice in the last two years.

He has always tried to make his support payments and is really trying to keep up. They could care less if he can live or not. Something is wrong with this picture. Fix the system.

Estella McCave  
Lansing

# **A new crop of students: Migrant children get Head Start schooling when they can**

Tuesday, June 20, 2006

By Federico Martinez  
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

A flood of tears streamed down

2-year-old Ashlee Miller's cheeks.

Her arms clung desperately around the neck of her teacher, Theresa Canfield.

"She was crying when she arrived this morning," said Canfield, a teacher for the New Era Migrant Head Start program. "We hold them until they're ready to be let down."

It can take awhile before the children relax in their new school.

The nature of their parents lives -- their lives -- is transitory. Their families continuously migrate across the country, in rhythm with the seasonal crop changes. Thousands of migrant workers first arrive in West Michigan each spring to harvest asparagus.

Within a day or two of arrival, young children like Ashlee are dropped off at Head Start programs like the one in New Era. They see little of their parents, whose work days begin at sunrise and stretch into the early evenings.

"If the parents are working sunup to sundown, we have to make sure those children's needs are being met," said food service manager Sheryel Smith.

Those "needs" include making sure children are eating healthy meals, developing sensory and language skills, potty training and learning to walk. Ages of the children at the New Era program range from 2 1/2 weeks to 5 years old.

The New Era Migrant Head Start program is operated by Telamon Corp., a non-profit organization that offers migrant workers and their families educational opportunities and emergency assistance such as food, temporary shelter and employment services. Telamon operates more than a dozen migrant Head Start programs through grant funding awarded by the state of Michigan.

Michigan began offering Head Start programs specifically for migrant youths during the late 1960s. Prior to the program, migrant parents had to take their children into the fields with them or try to find affordable day care in unfamiliar communities. Migrant laborers tend to earn meager incomes and live near or below poverty levels.

There are several reasons why migrant Head Start programs operate separately from similar Head Start programs for non-migrant youths.

Most migrant Head Starts are operated in rural areas that are in closer proximity to where the families live and work, said Jennifer Degen, director of the New Era Migrant Head Start Program. Traditional school calendars don't work for migrant children, whose arrival at school districts are determined by crop seasons.

Decades ago, language barriers also necessitated the need for separate programs, Degen said. Now that's less of an issue.

"Many of their parents only speak English," Degen said.

Students are taught in English and Spanish at the school. The reason is two-fold: To help some students better make the transition to English, but to also make sure students don't lose their culture, said Degen.

"A, B, C ..." a confident Juan Cano, 5, said, demonstrating his knowledge of the alphabet to his teacher.

Although classrooms are filled with various toys, puzzles and dolls, most of the youngsters vie for an opportunity to use the few computers in each room. The computers are filled with learning programs that the children find fun and easy to use.

To qualify for enrollment in migrant Head Start, a child's family must be considered "full-time" migrant workers, which means they travel at least six months out of the year performing agricultural work.

Seasonal migrants -- people who work in the same area where they live year-round --can't enroll their children in the migrant program.

Thirty-three employees, including 13 teachers and classroom aides, oversee the 100 children who attend the New Era program. Staff also includes various "specialists" charged with making sure students health records are up-to-date, helping families obtain needed health and social services and working with children who have severe learning disabilities.

The school is open from 5:45 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday and operates May through October. The school building was constructed five years ago and includes two infant areas, three toddler classrooms and three preschool classrooms. Two fenced-in outdoor playground areas are also located on school grounds.

A lot of what the staff does is just old-fashioned nurturing.

"Transition is hard at any age," said teacher Zahida Burgos. "We're doing our best to introduce them to things. I love watching them absorb everything we teach them."

By late morning recess, little Ashlee Miller's sobs have changed to laughter. She and some of her classmates are "creating" art with the help of a pile of whipped cream, pudding and graham crackers. The "hands-on" activity is designed to teach the children about different textures and shapes -- and it's just plain fun.

How is she feeling about school now, Ashlee is asked.

"Muy bien," she responds.

METRO DETROIT

## **No decision in Unger murder trial**

### **Jurors ask for flip chart, tape, markers**

*June 20, 2006*

BY BEN SCHMITT AND GINA DAMRON  
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITERS

BEULAH -- Jurors in the Mark Unger murder trial asked for an easel, a large flip chart, masking tape and markers about an hour into their second day of deliberations Monday. The request, which was granted, came to Benzie County Circuit Judge James Batzer at 10:15 a.m.

Unger, 45, of Huntington Woods is charged with killing his 37-year-old wife almost three years ago at a northern Michigan resort.

Prosecutors say Unger forced Florence Unger over the railing of a 12-foot-high wooden deck at Watervale -- a resort where the couple and their two sons were staying on Oct. 24, 2003.

The defense says her death was accidental. The jury is made up of six men and six women. Jurors were dismissed for the day Monday at 5:58 p.m. and will resume deliberating at 9 a.m. today.

The jurors, who began deliberating Friday morning after hearing nearly two months of testimony, have three options: first-degree murder, second-degree murder and not guilty. As the day went on Monday, jurors took several breaks from deliberations. Some congregated outside the courthouse around gray and black picnic tables, taking a few minutes to smoke cigarettes before heading back inside.

A uniformed Benzie County Sheriff's Department official held his post in a hallway near an exit most of the day, ushering the jurors in and out of the building.

Outside the courthouse, camera tripods and television news trucks with large satellite dishes cluttered the parking lot of the county government center in this resort town.

It took months of investigating the case before prosecutors filed charges against Unger, a former radio sports announcer.

The Ungers were going through a divorce at the time of Florence Unger's death. Their sons have been staying with their maternal grandparents since their mother's death.

Contact BEN SCHMITT at 313-223-4296 or [bschmitt@freepress.com](mailto:bschmitt@freepress.com).

Jun 20, 12:46 PM EDT

## **Jury deliberations continue in murder case**

By JOHN FLESHER  
Associated Press Writer

BEULAH, Mich. (AP) -- Jurors listened a second time to testimony about the condition of Florence Unger's body Tuesday as they considered whether to convict her husband of killing the suburban Detroit woman.

On the third day of deliberations in the trial of Mark Unger, the six-woman, six-man jury listened intently as a court reporter read an excerpt from the testimony of Dr. Stephen Cohle, the Grand Rapids pathologist who performed the autopsy.

Questioned by assistant prosecutor John Skrzynski, Cohle discussed the pooling of blood in Florence Unger's body and the presence of rigor mortis - the stiffening that occurs after death.

Attorneys said the jury's request shed little light on its discussions. Members can choose from three possible verdicts: guilty of first-degree murder, guilty of second-degree murder, and not guilty.

It was the first time the Benzie County Circuit Court jurors asked to have testimony read back, but Judge James Batzer said they had indicated other requests might be forthcoming.

On Monday, they asked for an easel, masking tape, paper and markers.

Mark Unger, 45, of Huntington Woods, is accused of pushing his wife from atop a boathouse rooftop deck at the Watervale resort south of Frankfort the night of Oct. 24, 2003. She fell 12 feet to a concrete apron and her body was found the next morning several feet away, bobbing at the shallow edge of Lower Herring Lake.

Prosecutors contend Mark Unger dragged his wife, unconscious but still alive, into the water, causing her to drown. He has pleaded not guilty and his attorneys say Florence Unger, 37, fell accidentally and died of head injuries.

Witnesses testified she had asked Mark Unger for a divorce, which he opposed.

## Still No Verdict In Unger Murder Trial

### *Second Day Of Jury Deliberations Complete*

POSTED: 6:45 pm EDT June 19, 2006

**BEULAH, Mich. --** Jurors concluded a second day of deliberations Monday without reaching a verdict in the trial of Mark Unger, a suburban Detroit man accused of killing his wife at a northern Michigan resort in 2003.

The six-man, six-woman panel has met behind closed doors for about 14 hours over two days since getting the case Friday morning in Benzie County Circuit Court.

Shortly after reconvening Monday, they sent Judge James Batzer a message asking for an easel, masking tape, paper and a marker. Some observers said the request suggested the jurors were in no hurry to make up their minds.

"It seems likely they would be doing some kind of a factual analysis that would be a lengthy process," said Robert Harrison, the lead defense attorney. "But you never know." Unger, 45, of Huntington Woods, is charged with first-degree murder.

His 37-year-old wife, Florence Unger, was found dead in Lower Herring Lake the morning of Oct. 25, 2003. Although seeking a divorce, she had joined her husband and their two young sons for a weekend trip to the Watervale resort about 50 miles southeast of Traverse City.

Police concluded the couple had quarreled as they stood on a boathouse rooftop deck by a lake the night before her body was discovered. They believe Mark Unger pushed his wife over the railing to a concrete pad 12 feet below, and then dragged her into the water, causing her to drown.

Unger, who didn't testify, pleaded not guilty. His attorneys said the death was accidental and that momentum from her fall or convulsions from massive head injuries might have caused Florence Unger to roll into the water.

The trial began April 26 and has entered its ninth week.



## **Save Our SIPP**

Published: June 20, 2006

The House Appropriations Committee today will take up a recommendation by President Bush to eliminate a government survey that is arguably the best source of information on the real-world effect of public programs that help the poor.

Established by the Census Bureau in 1984, the Survey of Income and Program Participation, or SIPP, is used extensively by analysts inside and outside the government. Over the decades, its rich detail has been indispensable in determining how well, or poorly, government has performed in critical areas. These include insuring and educating children, moving people from welfare to work and providing food stamps. Killing the survey would create a devastating void in public information starting in 2007. It would take until 2010, at the earliest, to complete an alternative survey. Losing years of reliable data would make it all too easy to base policy decisions on ideology rather than on evidence. The lack of objective data would also make it very difficult to hold politicians accountable for their decisions.

The survey costs all of about \$32 million a year. Unless appropriators come up with more, the financing for next year will fall to \$3.6 million, a sum mainly intended to finish data gathering that has already been started. Another \$5.6 million would be allocated to begin developing the alternative survey.

Representative José Serrano, Democrat of New York, plans to offer an amendment raising the appropriation by an additional \$10 million — not enough to keep the survey going strong, but enough to keep it alive for now. Congress should then make it a priority to come up with the full amount needed to save this font of invaluable public information.